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## UVI Reveals Over \$1.5 Million Lost in Federal Grants Terminated by Executive Orders

Terminated grants include a \$2.2M NIH program supporting biomedical research and a USDA climate-focused grant. UVI has implemented a hiring freeze and is exploring solutions to sustain student support and academic programs.

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The University of the Virgin Islands has confirmed the loss of more than \$1.5 million in active federal funding following the [termination of two major grants](#). The cancellations, prompted by recent executive orders from the new Trump administration, impact programs in climate resilience and biomedical research—both of which the university says remain central to its mission.

The impacted grants include the “Enabling Climate Smart Decisions for Agriculture and Forestry in the U.S. Caribbean” program funded by the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA), with a total award of \$375,841 and a remaining balance of \$148,317, and the Undergraduate Research Training Initiative for Student Enhancement (U-RISE) from the National Institutes of Health (NIH), a five-year grant originally totaling \$2.2 million, with \$1.4 million in remaining funds.

In an official statement released Thursday, UVI President Dr. Safiya George addressed the funding cuts, emphasizing that both programs continue to reflect the university’s long-term goals and values. “These are two areas that we remain committed to continuing and to address this loss of funding, UVI is exploring possible solutions,” Dr. George said. “These grant terminations are not unique to UVI and a challenge that is being experienced across higher education.”

She added, “We remain committed to offering quality education and support to ensure our students’ success and preparation for the workforce. We will adjust to these challenges without compromising our mission, our programs, and the benefits to our community,” she said.

The U-RISE program is designed to increase the number of underrepresented students pursuing competitive doctoral degrees and careers in biomedical research. Eligible students span a range of disciplines, including Biology, Chemistry, Psychology, Computer Science, Mathematics, Nursing, Physics, Social Science, and Marine Biology. The remaining \$1.4 million balance had been earmarked to support ongoing student training and academic development.

The USDA grant, meanwhile, was aimed at enhancing climate-smart decision-making in agriculture and forestry across the U.S. Caribbean. Its cancellation follows a shift in the agency’s funding priorities, which now emphasize “traditional agriculture, rural prosperity, and resource conservation” while deprioritizing climate change and environmental justice efforts.

According to the university, the NIH ended the U-RISE grant as part of a broader move to scale back support for diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI)-focused initiatives. The agency reportedly concluded that such programs are “non-scientific” and do not provide sufficient return on investment, a rationale UVI has noted but not endorsed.

In a message to the UVI community earlier this week, Vice President of Administration and Finance and Chief Financial Officer Dr. Leah Vanterpool had already announced immediate institutional responses to the anticipated funding losses. These include a temporary hiring freeze across all departments and institution-wide cost-saving initiatives.

“Securing federal funding has been essential to supporting many of our initiatives and the incredible work happening across UVI,” Dr. Vanterpool wrote. “Unfortunately, I must inform you that, as a result of the new administration’s executive orders, we have lost two of our key federal grants.”

Dr. Vanterpool stressed that while the university could not control the decisions behind the cancellations, leadership remains committed to navigating the situation responsibly.

“We recognize the difficulty this brings and want to acknowledge the strain this will place on our community, especially during such uncertain times,” she stated.

The hiring freeze, she said, is a necessary step to stabilize finances and maintain long-term viability. Departments across the university are now being asked to collaborate in identifying savings opportunities that do not compromise the quality of education or student services.